



State Board of Equalization

News Release

Vice Chair Michelle Steel

3rd District – Rolling Hills Estates

Kristine Cazadd
Interim Executive Director
www.boe.ca.gov

**For Immediate Release
February 23, 2011**

**Contact: NR 31-11-S
Anita Gore
916-327-8988**

Michelle Steel Announces Creation of a Southern California Appeals and Settlement Unit

Michelle Steel, Vice Chair of the State Board of Equalization (BOE), today announced the creation of an appeals and settlement unit in Southern California to address significant increases in appeals and settlement cases. Details were outlined in a presentation to the full Board at its Sacramento meeting today.

The new unit will assist with the increased caseload of appeals and settlement cases of nearly 33% and 36%, respectively, over two years. The acceleration in resolution of appeal and settlement cases will be a benefit to taxpayers so they may more quickly resolve existing liabilities as they continue to do business.

“This new unit will save taxpayer dollars by cutting the time taxpayers have to wait for appeals and therefore cutting the interest accrued on liabilities,” said Steel.

The BOE is committed to encouraging taxpayers to voluntarily comply with the law. The BOE's compliance program provides assistance to the public while also providing a fair and firm enforcement program to ensure taxes are properly reported and paid. The BOE Taxpayers' Rights Advocate (TRA) Office will work with business organizations to educate them about the new unit and to create greater understanding regarding the compliance program. The TRA will also assist with educating the public on the BOE's appeals and settlement process.

Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006 and re-elected in 2010, Michelle Steel serves as *Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate*. In December 2007, Steel discovered the Board of Equalization had delayed the return of millions of dollars in security deposits owed to California businesses. Procedures were changed due to Steel's decisive leadership. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$48 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

###